the PDS losing its focus in meeting the needs of the poor and disadvantaged specially in the rural, hilly, tribal and far flung areas.

Embargo on export of foodgrains

239. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to put an embargo on the export of grains;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government have decided to pay compensation to exporters who have release orders for grains from the Food Corporation of India;

(d) if so, the amount to be paid to the exporters who were hit by the embargo; and

(e) the factors that prompted Government to take the decision to put an embargo?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Quality of electrical gadgets

240. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry is getting a lot of complaints regarding inferior quality of household electrical gadgets, usually non-ISI marks or otherwise of inferior quality, which at times become life hazards;

(b) if so, how many electrical gadgets are having ISI marks and what is the percentage thereof; and

(c) whether Government are thinking it making mandatory for daily-use electrical gadgets to have ISI certification?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) to (c) Taking congnizance of complaints received from consumers/consumer organizations regarding marketing of low

quality electrical appliances for common domestic use by consumers, Government has already brought 24 electrical items e.g. electric stoves, electric iron, electrical immersion water heater, switches, electric radiators etc. used by consumers in their daily life under the Mandatory Certification Scheme of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). Compliance to the specification of the relevant Indian Standard for such products is also mandatory for import of such items into India.

Prices of mustard oil

†241. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the prices of mustard oil have steeply risen during the last six months throughout the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government are aware of large scale consumption of mustard oil in northern India;

(d) if so, the total consumption of mustard oil throughout India as edible oil;

(e) what steps Government have taken to ensure the supply of edible oil at controlled price; and

(f) the extent to which this step would provide relief to the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The total consumption of mustard oil throughout India as edible oil has been estimated at 12.31 lakh tonnes during the year 2002-03.

(e) and (f) The steps taken include:

(i) Import of edible oils (except coconut) is allowed on OGL,

(ii) The State Governments/UT Administrations have been addressed to maintain constant watch over the availability and prices of edible oils.

In view of easy availability, there is no controlled price for edible oils.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.